

Week was observed in 1958 with the theme "Wake Up and Read!"

Libraries play a vital role in supporting the quality of life in their communities. The digital divide has narrowed because libraries provide no-fee public computer and Internet access to meet the growing need for access to digital and online information, including eGovernment, continuing education and employment opportunities. Libraries help us discover a world of knowledge, both in person and online, and are a key player in the national discourse on intellectual freedom and equity of access. According to the National Center for Education Statistics' December 2008 report, library use was up to 1.4 billion visits nationwide among all types of library users, continuing a long-term trend of increased library usage.

By recognizing National Library Week, we show our appreciation to libraries, librarians, and staff across America. I am honored to support this resolution, and I ask my colleagues to join me.

Just as an aside, Mr. Speaker, I would like to encourage everyone, whether they are parents, aunts, uncles, or just mentors, to take children to a library and to read and mentor them. It's a great place to do it. It's a great place to meet, to learn, and to educate yourself.

I would like to thank Congressman VERNON EHLERS for introducing this.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. CHU. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize for 3 minutes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS).

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. I want to thank the gentlewoman from California for yielding time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to express strong support for H. Res. 1222, supporting the goals and ideals of National Library Week.

The science fiction novelist Frank Herbert stated, "The beginning of knowledge is the discovery of something we do not understand." Our national libraries serve as a much needed conduit by which we, as American citizens, gain more understanding of the world around us.

First sponsored in 1958, National Library Week is a national observance sponsored by the American Library Association and libraries across the country each April. It is a time to celebrate the contributions of our Nation's libraries and librarians and to promote library use and support. All types of libraries—school, public, and academic—participate. The City of Chicago is home to exactly 79 public libraries and to many private libraries with information ranging from cultural specific research to academic.

In my congressional district, the Seventh Congressional District of Illinois, we serve as the home of the headquarters for the American Library Association. I am proud to have this great organization in my district, and I am pleased that many of its staff mem-

bers are my constituents. We have libraries that are renowned, both public and private, such as the Harold Washington Library and the Newberry Library.

Last evening, at a town hall meeting in Westchester, Illinois, one of the trustees of the library board made it known to everybody present that libraries are vitally important, and I was very pleased to agree with him.

I also want to congratulate Robert Morris College, one of the academic institutions in my congressional district, for their installation of a new library that recently opened. It is magnificent.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to applaud the actions of the House of Representatives in recognizing the importance of National Library Week. I strongly support H. Res. 1222, which recognizes the significant contributions of libraries, librarians, and library workers to our nation's communities.

In my home state of Georgia, public library usage has increased more than 10 percent from 2008 to 2009. Libraries are narrowing the digital divide by providing no-fee public computer and Internet access to accommodate the growing need for access to digital and online information. In 2009, the number of public access computer sessions at Georgia libraries topped 15 million.

The services provided by public libraries are in greater demand in this economy. Americans use their public library's free Internet access to assist in their job search. When people economize, they check out books, magazines, and DVDs instead of buying them. In 2009, more than 68 percent of Americans had library cards, which is the greatest number of Americans with library cards since the American Library Association began measuring library card usage in 1990.

Libraries make a difference in the lives of millions of people in the United States. They are places for opportunity, education, and lifelong learning. Libraries allow those who may not be able to afford books to read and explore other cultures. Libraries are a key player in the national discourse on intellectual freedom and equity of access.

During the District Work Period, I was able to tour the Embury Hills Branch Library in Chamblee for the dedication ceremony. I also met with the DeKalb County Library Director, Darro Willey, and Ted Rinehart of the CEO's administration, to hear about the programs and educational activities that are taking place.

Libraries in the Fourth District are doing great work. The DeKalb County Library offers tax assistance. It also gets the community involved by using designs from DeKalb County residents for its library cards. The Gwinnett County Library allows patrons to improve their language skills by practicing conversational English.

Libraries are vital in helping their communities find and use information and are essential to supporting student achievement. They are essential institutions because they provide information that allows citizens to make informed decisions. They level the playing field by making the world of information available to anyone seeking it.

During National Library Week, I am especially pleased to celebrate the libraries, librarians,

and library workers. I will continue to encourage residents in the Fourth District of Georgia to take advantage of the tremendous public service libraries and librarians provide.

I strongly support H. Res. 1222 and urge my colleagues to do the same.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today in support of H. Res. 1222, Supporting the goals and ideals of National Library Week. I would like to thank my colleague, Rep. VERNON EHLERS, for introducing this resolution.

I support this legislation because on National Library Week, April 11th through the 17th, communities across the U.S. will recognize the contributions made by all library workers including librarians, support staff, and others who make library services possible. It also promotes increased public awareness of the significant contributions made by libraries to further the academic achievement and lifelong learning of our students. In addition National Library Week strengthens a belief in the value of libraries and positions librarianship as a desirable career opportunity.

This year's theme, "Communities thrive at your library," illustrates how the library is at the root of a thriving community, reminding individuals and informing others that the library is the place where people of all backgrounds learn and grow together. America's libraries and their workers remain valuable community assets during tough economic times. Also, with more businesses requiring online job applications, job-seeking resources are among the most critical and popular resources available in U.S. public libraries. Libraries provide not only the hardware and software applications, but they also offer skilled librarians who help teach people how to use the Internet and find the information they need quickly. As the wave of technology has changed the way we receive and transmit information, the Nation's libraries and their staffs have met those changes head on!

I would also like to take this time to emphasize the need for pay equity for library workers, even in this economy. Women librarian salaries continue to be lower than male library employees. The wage gap for the Nation remains with women earning 77 cents for every dollar a man earns. Library employees also continue to receive lower salaries in comparison with traditionally male occupations with comparable education requirements and job responsibilities.

In recognizing the valuable contributions to our Nation and citizens across this country, from libraries, we must not forget the hard-working individuals who provide such services. Such services will enable us to educate our citizens and bring them into the era of technology. This week will also bring to light the need to adequately compensate the staffers which provide these services.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of National Libraries Week. The foundation of our learning and literacy is based in books and the written word. Our Nation's libraries offer access to books, newspapers, magazines, the Internet and other informational materials. There is no other place where any individual who owns a library card can go in and access materials free of charge that promotes learning, discovery, opportunity, and self improvement. It is our libraries and librarians that provide this to millions of Americans each year.